



# **NORWAY**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**United Nations General Assembly**  
**60<sup>th</sup> Session**  
**Plenary**  
**Agenda item 14: The Situation in the Middle East**  
**Agenda item 15: The Question of Palestine**

**S T A T E M E N T**

**B Y**

**H.E. Ms. Mona Juul**  
**Ambassador**  
**Deputy Permanent Representative**

NEW YORK, 30 November 2005

Mr President,

The world is witnessing important developments in the Middle East.

We were encouraged by the way the Israeli Government showed great courage in implementing the withdrawal from Gaza and the West Bank this summer. We were also impressed by the dignified manner in which the evacuation was carried out by the Israeli Defence Forces. The Israeli withdrawal was an important step towards ending the Israeli occupation and establishing a two-state solution in accordance with the Road Map for Peace and relevant UN resolutions.

We were also encouraged by the recent agreement over the Rafah border crossing between the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority. The agreement bears both political and practical significance. It will enable the parties to maintain the important political momentum that followed in the wake of the Gaza disengagement and, as a confidence-building measure, may prove conducive to an improved atmosphere of dialogue and co-operation that could further induce the parties to implement their commitments as set out in the Road Map.

The agreement will also have positive practical implications for Palestinians, as it will enable them to travel freely, and open up for trade across the border. A stable and thriving Gaza is important to bolster the PAs legitimacy and reduce extremism.

However, improving the situation in Gaza is just one of many steps required in order to create a positive development that will ultimately lead to peace. The next challenge is to address the situation in the West Bank. The single most important thing that can be done to normalise the situation for Palestinians, is either to change fundamentally or to abolish the closure regime. Norway therefore urges Israel to lift closures and allow free movement.

Mr. President,

While Norway recognises Israel's security concerns, we cannot accept the construction of the separation barrier on occupied land on the West Bank. Nor can we accept the continued construction activities in the Israeli settlements. The building of the barrier, the enlargement of settlements and the construction of separate roads exclusively for the settlements are in conflict with international law and create facts on the ground that are detrimental to a contiguous and viable Palestinian state, and thus, to a peaceful solution to the conflict.

The Palestinian Authority bears a major responsibility for achieving positive political and economic development. The Palestinian Authority has achieved important results in its reform process. We encourage them to continue these reforms, particularly within the police and security sectors. Terrorism is unacceptable anywhere, at any time. The Palestinian leadership must make a strategic decision to fight terrorism, in accordance with the Road Map.

Norway welcomes the Palestinian elections, due to take place in January. These elections will be an important step in the consolidation of the Palestinian Authority, and strengthen the fundament for continuing the reform process. We urge the Israeli Government to take the necessary steps to contribute to successful elections.

Mr President,

These recent developments are important steps forward in the Middle East peace process. There is no need for a new peace plan. The Road Map contains all steps necessary for restarting the process. Efforts must be made by all parties, including the international community, to seize the present opportunities and sustain the political momentum in order to foster further development in the peace process.

Our goal is two viable states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. At this critical juncture we must join forces and do our utmost to make this vision come true.

Thank you, Mr President.